

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DHAHRA 01071 300636Z
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DHAHRAN 1071

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECRE, SA
SUBJECT: "SUN LIFE" PROJECT TO BEGIN SOON

1. ROBERT W. CHAMBERS, MANAGER OF DHAHRAN OPERATIONS (LARGELY ARAMCO PROJECTS) 3/D INTERNATIONAL OF HOUSTON, TEXAS, TOLD CONSOFF ON AUGUST 29 THAT FINAL AGREEMENT HAD BEEN SIGNED PREVIOUS DAY TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION OF ONE BILLION DOLLAR "SUN LIFE" PROJECT. THIS CONSTRUCTION PROJECT, LOCATED BETWEEN DHAHRAN AND DAMMAM, WILL BE KING KHALID'S EASTERN PROVINCE PALACE PLUS LARGE-SCALE OFFICE COMPLEX.

2. SOME OF FOREIGN SUBCONTRACTORS ALREADY HAVE PERSONNEL IN KINGDOM, ACCORDING TO CHAMBERS, BUT MORE WILL BE ARRIVING IN NEAR FUTURE. CHAMBERS ADDED, "THIS SHOULD GIVE SOME BOOST TO EASTERN PROVINCE ECONOMY."

3. COMMENT: CHAMBERS IS CONCERNED WITH 3/D WORK AT ARAMCO AND IS NOT TOO WELL VERSED ON DETAILS OF "SUN LIFE" PROJECT. HOPEFULLY OTHER 3/D REPRESENTATIVES WHO WILL BE IN CHARGE OF PROJECT WILL BE IN DHAHRAN AREA AFTER I'D HOLIDAYS IN SEPTEMBER, ANC CONGEN WILL THEN BE ABLE TO GET MORE INFORMATION.

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PAGE 02 DHAHRA 01071 300636Z

4. CHAMBERS COMMENTS ON "BOOST" TO EASTERN PROVINCE ECONOMY WILL BE WELCOME NEW TO MANY LOCAL CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTORS WHO HAVE LITTLE OR NO WORK IN PROGRESS CURRENTLY. WITH STRETCHOUT OF ARAMCO EXPANSION AND SOME OVERBUILDING OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS IN NEARBY TOWNS OF AL-KHOBAR AND DAMMAM, THERE IS OBVIOUS IDLENESS ON CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT IN AREA. (HOWARD CAMPBELL, AMERICAN CONSULTANT IN AL-KHOBAR, TOLD CONSOFFS THAT HE

ESTIMATES ABOUT 40 PERCENT OF ALL CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT IN PROVINCE IS IDLE. HOWEVER, MUCH OF THIS EQUIPMENT HE SAID WAS ROAD-BUILDING EQUIPMENT WHICH SHOULD COME INTO USE DURING FOURTH QUARTER OF 1978 WHEN NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION BEGINS IN AREA. NONETHELESS, HE MAINTAINED, MANY SMALL SAUDI CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTORS "ARE HURTING" FOR BUSINESS AND COULD GO BANKRUPT).

5. STRONG RUMORS PERSIST IN DHAHRAN THAT "SUN LIFE" WILL BE FUTURE WINTER QUARTERS FOR KING AND ROYAL FAMILY, MUCH AS TAIF IS SUMMER HOME. THIS RUMOR BASED LARGELY ON SIZE OF PROJECT AND ON FACT THAT COMPLEX WILL HAVE GREAT DEAL OF OFFICE SPACE.
BUSHNELL

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